

ETHICAL-VALUES PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

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Abstract

This paper presents a pedagogical model that emerged during the design of an online Masters programme developed with the support of funding from the Erasmus multilateral programme. The authors are experienced in both the development and implementation of online learning, particularly values-based learning approaches in higher education, and are deeply committed to building alternate theoretical models that stimulate thinking about values-based learning within an online context. This pedagogical model thus represents an alternative theoretical resource for thinking about the role of ethical-values in learning. Garrison, Anderson and Archer's (2000) Community of Inquiry Framework has been re-conceptualised and a new pedagogical model, titled the "Ethical-values Pedagogical Model", has emerged. This model posits that a positive ethical-values presence is critical to sustaining teaching, social and cognitive presences and thus the lynchpin for the enablement of appropriate and meaningful cognitive experiences. The ethical-values bases of learners and educators effectively filter the way in which the cognitive experience is created and the manner in which the individual learner makes sense and/or constructs meaning within the learning environment. As such, the ethical-values bases of participants impact significantly on the teaching, social and cognitive presences within the learning environment. The presence of ethical-values that foster authentic, democratic and transformative learning experiences for the individual learner, communities of learners and educators is critical to the success of this Ethical-values Pedagogical Model.

Key words: pedagogical model, ethical values, online learning

Introduction

The nature and processes of teaching and learning have changed in many ways in the past century. More recently the so-called era of globalisation, in which our traditional concepts of learning and education have been turned on their head and neatly packaged ideologies and communities have been undone, has brought about a reevaluation of the traditional concepts of teacher, learner and the learning context. There is a renewed focus on learner-centric approaches to teaching and learning, with an emphasis on facilitating situated, distributed, mediated, collaborative and democratic learning experiences. These require a reexamination of the role of values, identities and ethical bases in the process of learning, particularly within

online contexts. Despite the availability of many different teaching and learning frameworks for online learning, the literature review undertaken in this study found no evidence of an online pedagogic framework or model that explicitly addressed ethical-values dimensions within a learning context. Furthermore, the literature review revealed that the constantly changing technological landscapes underpinning online learning environments can act as a double-edged sword. Thus, online technological advancement can provide new ways for learners to create, connect, communicate and collaborate (as highlighted by Redecker, Ala-Mutka, & Punie, 2010), but its prevailing culture of 'openness' and 'informality' also exposes learners to issues of safety and privacy and even the possibility of litigation. In the discussion that ensues, Holland, Mulcahy, Besong and Judge present their online pedagogical model that posits an ethical-values perspective and presence as central to the creation of meaningful and safer learning experiences for learners in the 21st century.

Background to the evolution of the Ethical-values Pedagogical Model

The Ethical-values Pedagogical Model evolved from a critical review of the literature on the design and facilitation of online learning environments and discourse with colleagues engaged in the design of an online Masters programme in technology-enabled Education for Sustainable Development (which was developed with the support of funding from the Erasmus multilateral programme, between 2010 and 2012). The authors are experienced in both the development and implementation of online learning, particularly values-based learning approaches in higher education and are deeply committed to building alternate theoretical models that stimulate thinking about values-based learning within an online context. This model thus represents an alternative theoretical resource for thinking about the role of ethical-values in learning and as such represents a series of "ideas for practice, rather than ideas in practice" (Thomson, Lingard, & Wrigley, 2012, p. 2).

In the review of the literature on pedagogical models used within online learning, Garrison, Anderson and Archer's (2000) Community of Inquiry Framework and Salmon's (2000, 2004) Model of e-Moderating came to the fore as the pedagogical tools of choice in the design and facilitation of many online learning environments. Neither of these, however, explicitly addressed ethical-values dimensions within learning. Through an iterative process of dialogue with colleagues and critical engagement with the literature, Garrison, Cleveland-Innes and Fung's (2000) framework emerged as the most suitable basis for explicating the role of ethical-values in the process of learning. The discussion that ensues describes Garrison's et al. (2000) Community of Inquiry Framework and explains its relationship to and the emergence of the Ethical-values Pedagogical Model, which posits an ethical-values presence as the lynchpin for the enablement of appropriate and meaningful cognitive experiences. It is important to note here that ethical-values are implicitly assumed to guide learners towards positive actions.

Garrison's et al. (2000) Community of Inquiry Framework

In 2000, Garrison, Anderson and Archer presented the Community of Inquiry Framework, which was based on a constructivist and collaborative approach to teaching and learning. This popular framework comprises three elements: teaching presence, cognitive presence and social presence. At the centre of this model is the cognitive experience, where participants interact with the cognitive content and processes.

The teaching presence is described as the “design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realising personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes” (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001, as cited in Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, & Fung, 2010, p. 32). The teaching presence involves the development of curriculum, teaching strategies and learning activities; and focusing the community and the individual learner and learners towards meeting the learning outcomes. The social presence can be considered as the level of awareness of other/s in an interaction or the degree to which learners can project their “personal characteristics” (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 89) into the community. Social presence within a community of learners may involve the development of, and appreciation for, meaningful interpersonal communication and relationships within the learning community. The social presence impacts on the cognitive and teaching presences, particularly with regard to the quality of cognition that occurs and opportunities for the collaborative construction of knowledge. The cognitive presence is the process through which the learner within a community of inquiry “constructs meaning through sustained communication” (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 89). In this regard, the cognitive presence may result in learners engaging with a learning problem, exploring or challenging relevant information, making sense and integrating ideas, resolving the problem and reflecting on process.

Identities and ethical-values in an online learning context

Garrison's et al. (2000) framework has been useful in terms of understanding some of the elements that are pivotal to enhancing the educational experience. However, as mentioned earlier, it does not explicitly address the role of ethical values in influencing the teaching presence and in shaping the learning experience for the individual learner and communities of learners.

Values and identities in the past were located in a specific context and social milieu, but, in the age of online learning, are subject to multiple discourses, multiple agendas and interest groups. According to Zembylas and Vrasidas (2005), the capacity of the Web to facilitate learning environments that are populated by multiple relationships and hybrid identities poses the dilemma for online educators to provide an ethical pedagogy. In common with Ward and Prosser (2011) and Gomez (2009), Zembylas and Vrasidas (2005) turn to the work of the French philosopher, Levinas, to create a theoretical and philosophical underpinning to support the study of ethical values in online learning. Levinas postulated the importance of Face in understanding the Other. By Face, he was referring to face-to-face communication. In designing this model for online learning, the authors identified the importance of an ethical

values base to overcome the limitations of the lack of face-to-face communication. Viewed in isolation, the inclusion of an ethical value base does not resolve the ontological or ethical challenges posed by online learning environments but viewed in relation to the other components of the model, it creates a fresh opportunity to design curricula that challenge and demand a reflective approach to learning from all concerned. The building of Levinas' concept of a relational approach to knowing, needs the participants to focus on the other partners in the learning process and attempt to understand their diverse identities and approaches.

While there is general agreement on the need to include ethical values in the learning environment and while individually much has been written on both elements of this equation, very little work has been conducted on the actuality of ethical values bases and their impact on education and learning. Socratic approaches would suggest that as humans we all want and seek the good but we do not always succeed. If we accept Hill's (1991) assertion that a value is more than a belief and more than a feeling, then in designing online curricula it may be timely to consider the articulation of an agreed number of core values that will underpin this process. In addition, subject specific values may be additional to the core set. For instance, work in the area of education for sustainability could include a particular set of ethical values related to sustainability.

Finally, the online learning environment does create a number of specific ethical risks. These have been well documented elsewhere and relate to issues such as plagiarism, identity theft, unsuitable posts, the use of unsuitable internet sites and gender and race bias. Through the use of the ethical values pedagogical model such ethical risks can be identified, named and highlighted as part of the forward planning for the curriculum.

Ethical-values Pedagogical Model

In light of the issues identified above, Holland, Mulcahy, Besong and Judge (2011) re-conceptualised Garrison's et al. (2000) Community of Inquiry Framework and now present a new pedagogical model – Ethical-values Pedagogical Model – which posits a positive ethical-values presence as critical to sustaining teaching, social and cognitive presences, and thus the lynchpin for the enablement of appropriate and meaningful cognitive experiences. This section begins with an explanation of what an ethical-values presence is and then attempts to explain the interactions between the four presences and, importantly, how an ethical-values basis and presence is critical to the sustainability of appropriate, safer and meaningful learning within the online context.

The ethical-values presence is the values-bases and prioritised goods that direct the teaching, social and cognitive presences and by default the cognitive experience. These are the ethics and/ or values that promote respect, equity, fairness, solidarity, democratic actions and behaviours within the learning environment. For the individual learner, the ethical-values basis contributes to the development of learner's self-esteem and self-expression. For the educator/s, the ethical-values basis contributes to the creation of a democratic, collaborative and safe learning environment. For the community of learners, the ethical-values basis

and presence denotes a community who value respect, mutual understanding and consensus building. The Ethical-values Pedagogical Model, as illustrated in Figure 1, is guided by the ethical-values presence, which mediates the manner in which the three other presences (teaching, cognitive and social presences) outlined by Garrison et al. (2000) are manifested within the learning environment.

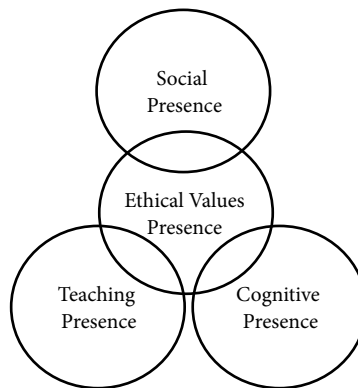


Figure 1. Ethical-values Pedagogical Model

The extent to which higher-level learning occurs for the individual learner is impacted by the quality of cognitive, social and teaching presences, which is evidenced by the degree to which the individual learner, community of learners and educator/s prioritise notions of what is of personal, community and learning value. These prioritised goods and values-bases constitute the ethical-values presence and are, to a great extent, the driver for decisions by the individual learner, community of learners and educator/s on how to engage in learning and to what extent learning will take-place.

The ethical-values presence impacts on the social presence, by promoting consensus building within communities of learners, respect for difference and fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment. It impacts on the teaching presence, by the prioritisation of inclusive teaching and learning strategies and the recognition of the importance of negotiated, collaborative and democratic learning opportunities. Furthermore, it impacts on the cognitive presence by giving the learner the confidence to interact and reason with the cognitive content and processes in a more critical manner.

The cognitive experience can be perceived as a fluid concept, where the individual learner, community of learners and educators engage in the co-construction of knowledge. The individual learner, community of learners and the educators are recipients and creators of information and actively engage in the dynamic construction and transformation of knowledge into learning. The ethical-values presence impacts on the cognitive experience by allowing both learners and educators to reach consensus on prioritised values and good practice necessary to the fulfilment of a democratic, participatory and safe teaching and learning environment.

Translating the Ethical-values Pedagogical Model within an online context

From the outset, the Ethical-values Pedagogical Model has been presented as a theoretical resource for thinking about the role of ethical-values in learning, or more simply, as a guide for practice. This section describes how the Ethical-values Pedagogical Model can be translated into practice by online course designers, educators and learners. It is important to note that fostering a positive ethical-values presence is critical to the success of this model, and, as such, the discussion opens with an exploration of this aspect. The discussion ensues with clarification on how to enhance the teaching, social and cognitive presences within an online context.

Enhancing the online ethical-values presence

Online learning environments must accommodate multiple identities, complex discourse and multiple learner relations (Zembylas and Vrasidas, 2005). One of the key challenges in online learning is to design courses where learners and educators prioritise, actively promote and are responsive to an agreed core of positive ethical-values. An ethical-value expresses the appropriateness of specific ethical principles and practices, with the aim of determining which principles or practices are best to guide our actions. In the context of learning, it essentially involves learners and educators prioritising a series of positive values and actions necessary for participatory and democratic learning. These positive actions may take the form of valuing 'others perspectives' or 'solidarity' or 'otherness' and are central to the creation of a participatory, democratic ethos and culture, that underpins transformative learning environments.

It is important for the learner, community of learners and educators to reflect on how their ethical values bases enhance the cognitive experience of all within a learning environment. Table 1 identifies a number of considerations that should be made by the learner, community of learners and educators to enhance the ethical-values presence within an online context.

Table 1. Guide to promoting a positive online ethical-values presence

Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware of own values-base • challenge one's own values and belief systems • encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation • respect the strengths and weaknesses of other learners • seek out others 'perspectives' • value 'otherness' • be open to listening to other opinions, attitudes and values-base • respect equality, inclusion and diversity within the learning environment • value the process of 'becoming'
Community of Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the meaningful participation of learners and educators in decision making • protect learners' rights to freedom of opinion, expression, association and dissent within the learning community • encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation • reach consensus on a core set of values and prioritised goods for the learning community • recognise the educator as a co-learner within the learner community • actively engage in negotiated and democratic learning

Sequel to Table 1 see on p. 47.

Sequel to Table 1.

Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide learners with opportunities to realise full potential • be aware of impact of own values-base on learners • continually reflect and challenge one's own values and belief systems • encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation amongst learners • respect the strengths and weaknesses of learners • be open to listening to learners opinions, attitudes and values-base • value equality, inclusion and diversity within the learning environment • actively promote and engage in negotiated and democratic learning • actively reflect on own role as a reflective and reflexive practitioner and co-learner within the learning environment • encourage learners to be caring, active and responsive within the learning environment (and beyond) • promote the concept of ownership and self-sustainability within the learning environment • embrace ongoing professional development opportunities and apply this in practice • actively engage in the development of learning communities
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A positive ethical-values orientation in learning calls for the awareness of the existence of the 'other' by the learners and the educators. Consequently, such awareness enables learners and educators to respond ethically to the others' experiences. The starting point for the learner in understanding ethical-values is to examine his/her own thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and values-base. The learner needs to challenge own perceptions and assumptions and actively seek others' perspectives. From a philosophical perspective, the learner needs to understand that learning is a process of 'becoming' and that the ethical-values base shapes this process of 'becoming'. Zembylas and Vrasidas (2005) argue that "knowing who we are does not necessarily assume that we know how to relate to others in an ethical manner" (p. 62). The learner needs to be open to listening to others' opinions, attitudes and values-bases; in this sense, the learner needs to value 'otherness'. This exploration of the value of otherness is facilitated through engagement with communities of learners and educators. For the community of learners, reaching a consensus and actively promoting an ethical-values base is necessary for the promotion of a safe, inclusive learning environment. For the educators, reflective and reflexive practice is critical to understanding own ethical-values base and how this shapes the learning content, processes, interactions and, ultimately, the learning of learners.

The ethical-values presence is evidenced in online learning through the choices, interactions and decisions made by the learner, community of learners and educators. In terms of the learner, the indicators for an ethical-values presence may include learner's expressions of solidarity and willingness to actively seek out, listen to and challenge others' perspectives. In terms of the community of learners, the indicators for an ethical-values presence may include a self-sustaining community of learners that actively engage in negotiated, collaborative and democratic learning. In terms of the educator/s, an ethical-values presence would result in the creation of inclusive, participatory, negotiated, collaborative, transformative learning opportunities, transparency in learning and recognition of the educator/s as a co-learner in the learning process.

Enhancing the online teaching presence

The rapid change of technology (and in particular the integration of social media in the learning environment) offers new online (and off-line) pedagogical possibilities. There are a variety of approaches and basic principles in online pedagogy that impact on the teaching presence. These include the design of learning activities and choice of teaching strategies, each of which can impact for better or worse the learning experience. Good practice in online pedagogy promotes: learner centred approaches; active learning strategies; self-directed learning; interactivity, cooperative and collaborative learning; intercultural communication; and authentic situated learning. Thus, there is a need to allow a good degree of flexibility for learners in terms of the cognitive content and the teaching and learning strategies used to mediate learning.

The educator essentially sets the tone and visibility of teaching presence. The role of the educator is to guide, negotiate and advise learners towards the fulfilment of learning outcomes. The educator guides learning, develops learning strategies and organises the learning environment such that it enhances learners' critical thinking skills, self-organisation and self-directed learning. The educator also guides learners' activities towards cooperation, collaboration and interaction with the learning community, learning environment and the learning resources. The educator should use methods that build upon learners' experiences and knowledge base and provide opportunities for learners to connect prior knowledge with current learning.

Table 2 provides guidelines on enhancing the teaching presence, particularly in relation to the aesthetic design, pedagogic design and the cognitive content of the online course. The aesthetic design refers to the 'look and feel' of the online course and impacts on how the 'teaching presence' is perceived. The pedagogic design refers to the teaching, learning and assessment strategies that are promoted within the online course. The cognitive content comprises the learning content, activities and resources.

Table 2. Guide to enhancing the online teaching presence

Aesthetic Design	Pedagogic Design	Cognitive Content
Use standardised formats for content presentation	Provide opportunities for multiple forms of learning: case-study learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, interdisciplinary learning, service learning, discovery learning and ICT-enabled learning	Content needs to be goal-oriented, focusing particularly on meeting the learning outcomes
Ensure the content is accessible and usable by learners	Encourage interactivity in the form of one-on-one interaction with a partner; with the teacher; in small groups; with the entire class;	Select and sequence the content into discrete learning modules and clearly define the learning outcomes

Sequel to Table 2 see on p. 49.

Sequel to Table 2.

Use local language where possible and necessary	Design collaborative tasks	Select content that is authentic, reliable and current
Use translations where possible	Use online presentation tools like slide shows	Select content that meets the needs of learners with different learning styles and preferences
Highlight important points	Use online communication tools/ social mediadesign authentic situated tasks	Structure content so that learners can build on prior knowledge and experience, and move towards an understanding of an entire system
Use images and/ or multi-media elements to add interest or to pose a question	Take into account student prior knowledge, skills and aptitudes	Integrate multicultural and multi-disciplinary perspectives in content
Use colour for headings or bands to break up content.	Allow opportunities for intercultural actions	Re-use existing learning materials suitable within the online context
Use clear and concise information in the navigation structure	Encourage note making from online material using annotation tools	Provide links to journal articles and scanned readings for downloading
Use text, graphics or images, simulations, audio or video segments to enhance interactivity and visual display.	Encourage group discussions, debates	Check accuracy of content
Avoid putting in too many resources as this may confuse students	Provide interactive online assessment activities	Update materials and check if links are active
Avoid a monologue writing style as this may discourage the students from engaging in the learning process	Guide the learners through the learning content	Assign case studies to analyse
Work within the bandwidth constraints of the web.	Provide challenging learning activities to stimulate debate and critical thinking	Provide a forum for gathering and sharing community resources
Distribute online evaluation forms to gauge learner responses to aesthetic aspects of the course	Use 'reflections' in order to situate learning	Provide interactive online assessment activities
	Provide netiquette and interaction guidelines	Organise thematic content around content issues and materials and tools, with activities such as: action research projects and case studies
	Provide prompt and motivating feedback.	
	Use online surveys to elicit feedback on pedagogic aspects of course	

Enhancing the online social presence

The social presence in online learning is critical. There are a variety of factors that impact on the social presence. These include the creation and fostering of a community of learners, the role of the educator, the contributions from the individual learner and most importantly, the interaction of the learner, educator and the community of learners. Online courses can be perceived as 'cold' or 'distant'. It is very important to design an online system that promotes communication and interactivity of all participants in the learning process. Table 3 provides guidelines on enhancing the social presence.

Table3. Guide to enhancing the online social presence

Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on the learning task and corresponding learning outcome/s • respect the strengths and weaknesses of other learners • be open to listening to others opinions, attitudes and values-base • think carefully about when to contribute and when to allow space for others to contribute within the online community • become time-conscious when communicating within the community. Lengthy postings on discussion forums should be avoided • become proactive in engaging in the community of learners.
Community of Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reaching consensus on protocols for: communication, internet safety, netiquette, masking and flaming • focusing on the learning task and corresponding learning outcome/s • reaching agreement on core values or goods that are prioritised within the community • allowing for opportunities to explore multiple perspectives • valuing multi-cultural perspectives
Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set clear tasks and learning activities for the community of learners • set learning outcomes for the individual learner • contribute to fostering a climate of openness, democracy, mutual respect and trust • design collaborative activities for the community of learners • moderate learning within the community of learners, giving advice where necessary • mentor the learner/community of learners towards the completion of the learning activity and achievement of learning outcomes • guide the community of learners towards self-sustainability • provide consistent, clear and constructive communication and feedback to community of learners • provide timely advice, support and feedback to learner/community of learners • encourage interactivity in online forums and activities. • negotiate with learners on an agreed protocol for: communication, internet safety, netiquette, masking and flaming • reflect on own values-base and how this might impact on the learning community • reflect on own role as a reflective practitioner and co-learner within the community of learners

Enhancing the online cognitive presence

The cognitive presence can be perceived as the manifestation of a process through which the

learner makes meaning of the cognitive experience. The degree of cognitive presence can be enhanced through self-reflection and through collaboration with other learners, or with educators. Evidence of a cognitive presence can be seen through learner's interaction in the learning activities and processes. This can be in the form of engagement in discussion, peer review and self-reflection and/or in the co-creation of learning artifacts. Table 4 provides guidelines on enhancing the cognitive presence.

Table 4. Guide to enhancing the online cognitive presence

Guide to enhancing the cognitive presence		
Learner	Community of Learners	Educator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the learning outcomes • Pro-actively engage in the learning activity and processes • Reflect on role of own values base on the learning process • Critically engage with learning process • Seek out others perspectives • Challenge own values base and belief systems • Develop an understanding of own learning styles and preferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the learning task and corresponding learning outcomes • Reach agreement on core values or actions to be prioritised within the community • Provide a safe environment where the learner feels free to contribute own perspective and challenge others' perspectives • Respect individual perspectives and contributions • Provide opportunities for an individual learner to explore multiple perspectives • Challenge individual's perspectives and contributions • Value multi-cultural perspectives and collaborative interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set learning outcomes for the individual learner • Contribute to fostering a climate of openness, democracy, mutual respect and trust • Mentor the learner towards the completion of the learning activity and achievement of learning outcomes • Encourage self-paced as well as collaborative learning • Provide consistent, clear and constructive communication and feedback to learners • Provide timely advice, support and feedback to learner • Encourage learner interactivity in online forums and activities. • Reflect on own values-base and how this might impact on the learning of the individual learner • Reflect on own role as a reflective practitioner and co-learner within the learning environment

Conclusion

The Ethical-values Pedagogical Model centres on the promotion of ethical-values that foster meaningful and appropriate learning experiences within the learning environment. The ethical-values bases of learners and educators effectively filter the way in which the cognitive experience is created and the manner in which the individual learner makes sense and/or constructs meaning within the learning environment. As such, the ethical-values bases impact significantly on the teaching, social and cognitive presences within the learning environment. Therefore, the ethical-values presence is critical to the sustainability of appropriate and meaningful learning within the online context. Research is currently being conducted

on indicators for the ethical-values presence within the context of online learning and the outcome of this will be discussed in future publications.

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